

5,345 MILES



Natali Seviukova reacts next to her house following a rocket attack on the city of Kyiv, Ukraine, Friday, Feb. 25, 2022.

War hits close to home for Ukrainian Northwest student

SIDNEY LOWRY
News Editor | @sidney_lowry

Over 5,000 miles away from his home of Lutsk, Ukraine, Northwest student Vitaliy Tsyttsyk is watching a war in his country through a screen. Every few minutes, his phone buzzes with news from local Ukrainian journalists about the country he is far from, but everyone he loves is right in the middle of.

Russian President Vladimir Putin made a speech Feb. 24 about sending troops to Ukraine for special military operations after decades of conflict between the two nations.

“For the longest time, throughout our whole history, Russia has always tried to control Ukraine, but it just didn’t seem possible that something like this would happen in the 21st century,” Tsyttsyk said. “I feel like I should be there, and I feel like I should do something.”

When Tsyttsyk first heard that Russia was invading Ukraine, it was just another night. He was on his way to get food when he saw Putin’s speech about sending troops into Ukraine. Just moments after, he saw a CNN broadcaster get interrupted by explosions while reporting in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine.

“I was just shocked,” Tsyttsyk said. “I called my parents immediately, and they didn’t know yet, because it was the middle of the night and there was nothing going on in my city yet. I went to my car, I sat down and I didn’t go anywhere. I could not hold the steering wheel.”

Recently, phone calls home have switched from catching up on what everyone has been doing to making sure his family is safe and asking if there is any news.

“When they’re sleeping, I’m checking everything to make sure if something happens there so they know right away,” he said. “When I’m sleeping, they are sending me messages so when I wake up, I know they’re fine.”

His hometown is in the western part of Ukraine, just under 250 miles from Kyiv. Despite being hundreds of miles away from where the initial explosions were heard, there was panic. The first day of the invasion was close to home when a TV tower was shelled at a military airport in Lutsk.

“In my city, they didn’t hit any civilian buildings, but they were bombing in other parts of Ukraine. They bombed residential areas and high rises, they bombed kindergartens, they bombed hospitals,” he said. “It’s scary because even though at the moment, they’re safe, nobody knows what’s gonna happen; the situation changes in minutes.”

“Sirens that warn of danger from bombs are heard every hour in at least one city,” Tsyttsyk said.

“It’s scary because even though at the moment, they’re safe, nobody knows what’s gonna happen; the situation changes in minutes.”

-VITALIY TSYTTSYK
UKRAINIAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDNET

SEE WAR | A4

A BRIEF HISTORY OF
UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

1991 Ukraine becomes independent
After the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukraine votes to become independent.

2004 The Orange Revolution
Viktor Yanukovich, supported by Russia, won the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election against the western-oriented candidate Viktor Yushchenko. Many thought the results were fraudulent. People took to the street wearing orange, resulting in a revote where Yushchenko won.

2008 Russia fights Ukrainian NATO membership
NATO began conversing about extending a membership plan to Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin opposed Ukraine’s membership. NATO did not offer Ukraine a membership plan.

2014 Protests overthrow election results
Ukrainians protested President Viktor Yanukovich after promises to work toward being involved in the European Union went unfulfilled. At least 130 civilians were killed during the protests.

2019 Volodymyr Zelenskyy defeats pro-Russian incumbent
A former comedian largely defeated pro-Russian candidate Petro Poroshenko in the presidential election.

FEB. 21 Russia recognizes Ukraine as a sovereign nation
Regions of Donetsk and Luhansk separated from Ukraine after leadership from pro-Russian government officials. Following a meeting with NATO, Putin recognized these regions as independent troops to “keep the peace.”

FEB. 24 Russia launched invasion of Ukraine
Just three days after recognizing Ukraine as a sovereign nation, Russia began an invasion into the eastern parts of Ukraine.

GRAPHIC BY SIDNEY LOWRY NEWS EDITOR
SOURCE: U.S. NEWS

Professor gets feature in Nat Geo publication

JAKE PRATER
News Reporter | @JakobLPrater

Assistant professor of art history Karen Britt was featured in the November 2021 issue of National Geographic’s “Unearthing 100 Archeological Treasures of the Past” for her involvement with Huqoq mosaics in ancient synagogues in Israel. Mosaics built on the floors of ancient sites are Britt’s specialty.

The Huqoq excavation project is centered around the excavation of a synagogue built sometime in the late fourth century or early fifth century. This ancient synagogue is special because the floor is a mosaic. Four floor mosaics were found at this site, and it’s Britt’s task to document, research and publish the found mosaics.

Britt was originally pursuing a degree in languages, mainly Greek and Latin, at the University of Cincinnati. Britt planned on teaching Greek and Latin at a private high school, but that changed when she got invited on a trip to Turkey. Her advisor was a classical archaeologist and invited her to help on an excavation site at the ancient city of Troy in the summer of 1995. Britt said she figured out in one day that archeology was something she loved and wanted to continue doing.

“I loved everything about the process of archeology,” Britt said. “That experience was a really pivotal one for me in terms of opening a door to a field that I hadn’t really thought about studying.”

SEE ART | A4

Student felony case moved to April hearing

KENDRICK CALFEE
Editor-in-Chief | @calfec_kc

The scheduled hearing for a felony case involving a Northwest student has been postponed to April 12 after 4th Circuit Associate Judge Robert Rice granted continuance.

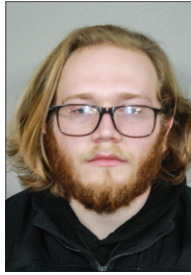
Logan D. Fainter, 19, of Macon, Missouri, is charged with invasion of privacy — a Class E felony — for allegedly video recording two female students in a University residence hall bathroom.

After an arrest by University Police, Fainter was booked into the Nodaway County Jail Feb. 13. Fainter first appeared in court Feb. 15, within 48 hours of confinement, at which time Rice filed a bond condition of release from the jail.

In arraignment, Fainter entered a not-guilty plea. The case was originally set for docket call March 1 in a criminal setting.

Fainter made the court-allowed 10% bond payment, paying \$500 of his \$5,000 bond, and was released from the county jail Feb. 15. The court ordered Fainter to report directly to Private Probation Services in Macon, Missouri, to undergo a GPS monitoring system. He has been residing at his permanent residence since his bond payment.

SEE COURT | A4



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34

Employees continue to outpace

students in vaccine reporting

Deaths from COVID-19 since March 2020
Nodaway County

by Maryville R-II schools

MASK OFF.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

Face-covering ordinance proved divisive measure

Get both doses of COVID-19 vaccine in the same place

Northwest removes mandate following CDC guidance

NATHAN ENGLISH
Managing Editor | @nathan_3nglish

For the first time since August 2020, Northwest students who are enrolled in fall and spring classes attended classes without wearing masks.

The removal of the mask mandate was announced Feb. 25 via an email from Northwest News and took effect Feb. 28. The decision was made following alterations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on its mask guidance. The University had followed CDC recommendations for previous iterations of its mandate.

Lt. Amanda Cullin, a member of the Crisis Response Team 2, said Northwest decided to act swiftly after the change.

“We’ve changed quickly before when we implemented mitigation measures because it was recommended by the CDC. We did it the other way around,” Cullin said.

The CDC recommendation, which was made a few hours prior to Northwest’s removal of the mandate, said up to 70% of Americans no longer needed to wear masks because vaccinations and herd immunity were, and have been, driving down cases of severe illness. Hospitalization numbers have fallen significantly across the country since January.

The CDC has classified Nodaway County in the high-risk category, which means it would recommend masking for individuals 12 and up. However, Tom Patterson, administrator for the Nodaway County Health Department, said he believes the CDC is using regional data, making for a less accurate picture of the pandemic in the county.

The county is below the high-risk threshold in cases and hospitalizations. Patterson said the percent of inpatient beds in the CDC’s model is likely being skewed by nonspecific data, placing the county in a higher category.

“We feel like we are firmly in the low to medium (categories),” Patterson said.

As of Feb. 28, the positivity rate in Nodaway County was below 7%. Two residents were hospitalized with COVID-19, but none were at Mosaic - Maryville.

Previously, Northwest had been eyeing spring break as a time when mitigation measures, such as the mask mandate, could be altered. However, Cullin said University officials didn’t feel a need to delay and enforce an outdated recommendation until spring break.

“Aligning with the CDC is what we’ve done from day one. And so, that’s why the change was made as quickly as possible,” Cullin said.

The move has garnered a fair amount of feedback from students, staff and others. Cullin said some have been concerned about those at Northwest who may be immunocompromised, while others have had more of a “finally” reaction to the mandate’s removal.

“We align with what the medical professionals and experts say; we align with the CDC,” Cullin said. “We make incremental decisions so we can change quickly.”

Cullin added that compliance has been high for previous mitigation efforts, and those still wishing to wear a mask can get a KN95 mask from University Police at any time, free of charge.

Mosaic - Maryville will keep its mask mandate for the time being, President Nate Blackford said. The hospital has and will continue to follow the “first in last out” model for mitigation decisions. There have been some discussions about what a removal could look like, but no final decisions have been made, Blackford said.

In its March 1 COVID-19 report, NCHD announced a new death from the virus, the 39th since the pandemic and the first since Jan. 9. The individual was in the 70-79 age category.

COVID-19 cases have fallen sharply since omicron’s peak in mid-January. The county hasn’t posted a double-digit day in new cases since Feb. 15, and active cases have been hovering from high teens to mid-20s during that time span. Mosaic - Maryville has had numerous days without a patient hospitalized with the virus.

“It just kind of takes the pressure off,” Blackford said of the low case and hospitalization rates.

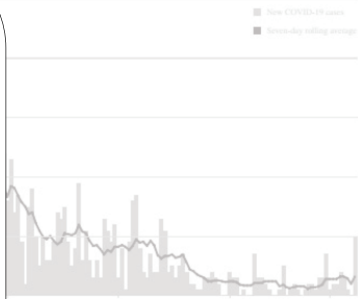
He continued to use a phrase he’s used often in the past to describe his outlook during lulls in the pandemic, “cautiously optimistic.” The county was in a similar situation with COVID-19 in April 2020 before the delta variant hit, leading to significant spikes.

As has been the case throughout the past two years, Northwest cases have followed the same path as the county, falling to five active cases at the time of publication.

“Every week we get along without another wave of this stuff; we should be better off when we do see it again,” Patterson said.

President Joe Biden in his State of the Union address March 1 hinted at a return to normal that hasn’t been seen since COVID-19 first made landfall in the U.S. Patterson said he hopes the pandemic is reclassified as an endemic — a less severe state normally used to describe a virus with static rates — by the summer.

Nodaway County since August 2020



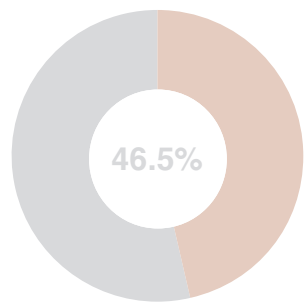
end mask mandate

WORSE record-high COVID-19 cases

102 Cases from Aug. 22-25

depends daily life

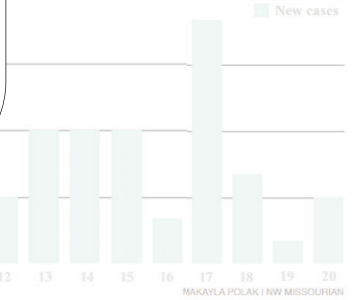
halts for basketball and sanitizer



Vaccinated population in Nodaway County

insane

DAILY CASES IN COUNTY UP TO SEPT. 20



Mandate leaves officials waiting

common areas when social distancing possible

UNDERSTANDING CDC COVID-19 COMMUNITY LEVELS

LOW

Limited impact on healthcare system, low levels of severe illness

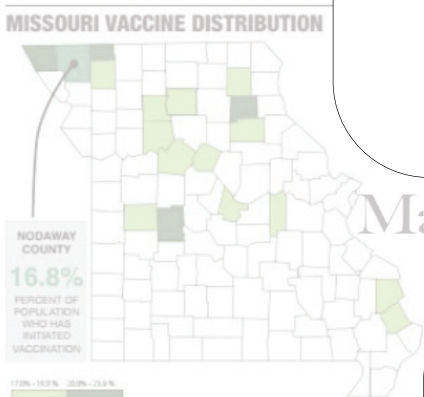
MEDIUM

Some impact on healthcare system, more people with severe illness

HIGH

High potential for healthcare system strain, high level of severe illness

Nodaway County has been inaccurately counted in the high-risk category, NCHD Administrator Tom Patterson said, because of nonspecific data used by the CDC to determine the percent of inpatient beds available.



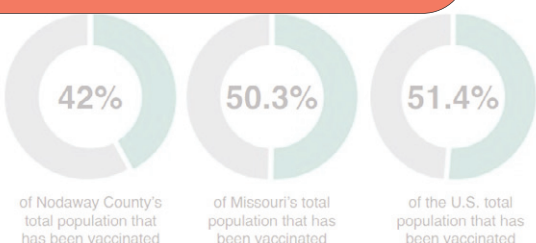
OUR VIEW: Masks should be mandated by Maryville R-II schools

Physician dispels vaccine myths

Hundreds of students

New COVID-19 variant looms, death toll rises

deaths from COVID-19 in Nodaway County



SOURCE: OUR WORLD IN DATA & MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES MAKAYLA POLAK | NW MISSOURIAN

Northwest modifies mandate for vaccinated individuals

We have written 354 stories related to COVID-19 since March 2020.

★★★ ELECTION 2022

McKim runs in contested board race

KENDRICK CALFEE
Editor-in-Chief I @calfee_kc

Josh McKim has served on the Maryville R-II School Board for six years now. But he doesn't want to stop there.

McKim is running for reelection to the board because, as he puts it, "public service doesn't stop when you've achieved something." Rather, it's an ongoing cause he remains called toward.

"On that board are people who all have the best interest of kids at heart and truly want to do what's right for our students," McKim said. "We may not always agree on what that is, but the intent and the heart of those people is really good."

Maryville is McKim's hometown. He's a proud Spoofhound who attended school in the district from first grade through high school graduation.

He went on to attend Northwest and graduated with a bachelor's degree in history and minor in economics. He married his wife, Angie, in Maryville, then had a short outing in Kansas before moving to Oklahoma for about 10 years.

McKim graduated from Oklahoma State University with a master's degree in economics and stayed in the state to begin work in economic development.

This experience prepared him for the job he has outside of the school board — executive director of Nodaway County Economic Development — a role he has served in since 2014.

Initially, he was going to go to Oklahoma State for a master's in history, but after a year in the program, he found his passion for economics.

"Education has always been important to our family and to myself," McKim said. "I considered making it my career and decided not to, and now the school board still allows me to be engaged in the educational process."

His move back to Maryville wasn't purely work-motivated. McKim returned to be closer to family and engage in the community where he felt at home.

"My parents stayed here when I left, and it just always was home," McKim said.

Though a seat on the school board is an elected position, for McKim, it has never been about individual politics. The nature of a good board goes against that frame of mind, he said, because it is about trying to figure out what the school district can do to improve the educational experience of its students.

To achieve this, the board has to find common ground when opinions differ, he said, and that's not always easy.

Throughout his most recent term on the board, a hot-button issue has been the effect of COVID-19 on Maryville schools.

McKim commended the Maryville administration for its ability to work through a difficult, unforeseen time the pandemic turned out to be.

He also recognized that literally no one was prepared.

Like schools across the nation, Maryville schools battled a teacher shortage due to quarantines, substitute shortages, adjusted operations to fit state and local COVID-19 guidance, and other behind-the-scenes juggling that became overwhelming at times.

The district enacted remote learning, a hybrid-learning system and managed to sustain in-person learning. Throughout that process, McKim said what stuck out to him was how important in-person learning is to students.

"It's difficult, having to wade through those waters and balance public health concerns with educational concerns and understanding that we can't control the public health and what's going on there, but that we are a contributor to it," McKim said.

McKim said it will be important for the district to help prepare its teachers for more remote learning instruction in the future, as that was an obvious hurdle for the schools when the pandemic first became an issue.

"I think that's a good thing for an elected official to say 'I may have gotten that right, I may have gotten that wrong, and I want to learn from it and hopefully do better in the future,'" McKim said.

Four-day weeks?

With some local, small schools adopting new schedules, a four-day school week is not a new concept to McKim or the board. The Maryville R-II Board of Education has not held official conversations about the concept or taken it up to consider, but it is a method it has observed, McKim said.

"So as you look at it, you can consider that there's some cost savings to a four-day, there's a number of things that are positive on it, and there's a number of things that are negative on it," McKim said. "You have to weigh 'what are we about as a school district, what is our core activity?' Ours is helping students be prepared. Cost savings is great, but if you're cutting costs at the expense of students, you're missing something."

McKim said he doesn't know what the board's overall appetite would be for conversations about a four-day week in the future, and he doesn't envy the local school boards that have had to make the decisions on the matter.

Promoting small business

Outside of the school board, McKim's work at NCED has advocated for small businesses when they have, at least locally, needed it most. Workshops, informational meetings, Facebook Live sessions, Zoom meetings and many other resources were put together for small businesses by the NCED and Greater Maryville Chamber of Commerce.

Amy Gessert, executive director of the Greater Maryville Chamber of Commerce, works out of the same building as McKim and has collaborated with the NCED on projects.

"I come to him as my moral compass in this job ... and he never fails to give me solid advice that comes from a good place," Gessert said. "He's always wanting to do the right thing for people. Even if it's not the easy thing, he's always wanting to do the right thing."

Gessert described her working relationship with McKim as a partnership that brings the right people together to make things happen for the local economy, business owners and the community alike.

Gessert said she cannot endorse any candidate for public office given her position at the Chamber, but she said her working relationship with McKim has been positive.

"No matter what is happening around us, he is still that good person," Gessert said. "His integrity is something that really stands out in this field."

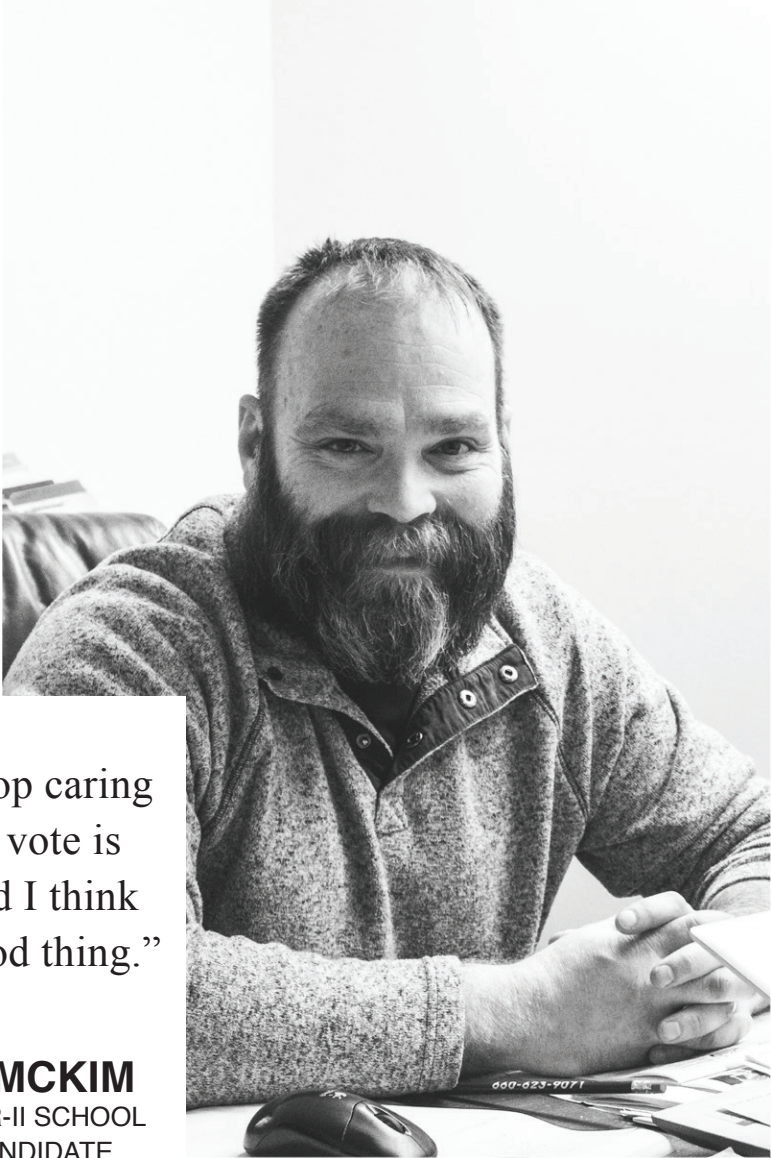
McKim is one of three people running for two open positions on the Maryville R-II School Board. If elected, this would be his third term on the board.

"Ask my wife, there have been plenty of times I have trouble falling asleep because of a school board vote that night," McKim said. "I don't stop caring after the vote is done. And I think that's a good thing."

CANDIDATES "ON THE ISSUES"

Four-day weeks
The concept isn't new to the Maryville R-II School Board, nor McKim. But he doesn't foresee a discussion on the topic anytime soon.

COVID-19
McKim wants to help better prepare teachers for remote learning instruction in the aftermath of the pandemic. He also highlighted how important in-person learning is for students.



"I don't stop caring after the vote is done. And I think that's a good thing."

- JOSH MCKIM
MARYVILLE R-II SCHOOL
BOARD CANDIDATE

KENDRICK CALFEE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Josh McKim sits at his desk Feb. 25. McKim is running for a third term on the Maryville R-II School Board.

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Student senate hears wage increase proposal

KENNEDY KALVODA
News Reporter | @KKalvoda1

The Student Senate is now halfway through the designated fees presentations made by University officials. Another presentation was given by University Police Chief Clarence Green, Administration Vice President Stacy Carrick and Coordinator of Student Employment Paula McLain March 1. During the presentation, the officials announced they are planning to propose a wage rate increase from \$8.60 to \$10.30 for student employees.

The University is still discussing whether the increase will be all at once or spread out over three years, as there were multiple proposals for the raise.

During the presentation, Carrick said a 4% increase in tuition and fees, no increase in room rates, and a 7.7% increase in board rates will be proposed to the Board of Regents.

The University will also be proposing a \$9.85 per credit hour raise to designated fees to help make sure this wage rate for student employees is met.

Many senators said they think the first option, which will have the wage rate raise after one year, is the best decision

to make for student employees. The senators will be making their official decision through a vote at their next meeting after spring break.

Green said the University needs to be more competitive with its student employee positions, and the wage increase will help increase competitiveness.

“We’re gonna see more opportunities; we’ll be able to attract better candidates for our positions and fill more positions. It’s gonna be highly impactful for students. They’ll have more money in their pockets to take care of other costs that are associated with attending school,” Green said.

In other business, the Civic Service Committee of Senate announced the spring blood drive will occur April 20 and 21 in the Tower View Room of the J.W. Jones Student Union. Sign-ups for the drive will take place at www.savealife.com/group by entering code CZ.

Student Activities Council Representative Brady Fritts announced that volunteers are needed for the spring concert April 8. There are four volunteer committees: Production, Hospitality, Ticketing and Pre-show. Students interested in volunteering, contact SAC or Student Senate.



SILVIA ALBERTI PHOTOGRAPHER
University Police Chief Clarence Green gives a presentation to Student Senate, proposing a wage rate increase from \$8.60 to \$10.30 per hour. The reason behind the increase is to add more competition between off-campus jobs and on-campus student employment.

COURT CONTINUED FROM A1

While it is still under investigation, UPD declined to comment on the details of the ongoing case.

According to a probable cause statement from University Police, two female students completed voluntary written reports describing similar incidents that took place Jan. 27 and Feb. 5. The voluntary reports described a white male pointing a cell phone camera over or under the shower stall they occupied while they were nude.

Both victims verified they did not give anyone consent to photograph, film, videotape, produce or otherwise create an image of them in the shower.

According to the UPD probable cause statement, Fainter gave written consent to a search of his phone without a warrant at 12:59 p.m. Feb. 10. The first victim identified her black Under Armour flip-flops in an image found in the search. The date and time stamp aligned with the original statement made by the first victim, and the sandals were placed into evidence.

The same probable cause statement said Fainter admitted Feb. 13 to creating an image or a video of an unknown person without their consent at 9:09 p.m. Jan. 27 in the female bathroom on the third floor of Millikan Hall. He admitted to doing the same to another person Feb. 5, according to the statement.

In Missouri, Class E felonies are the least severe in terms of punishment. They are punishable by up to four years in prison, one year in jail or a fine of up to \$10,000. Under this felony class, there may also be a chance for probation.

ART CONTINUED FROM A1

Britt declared a double major, adding in archaeology. She earned her Master of Arts in classical and Near Eastern art and a degree in archaeology at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. After earning her degrees, Britt continued archaeology in Greece and Turkey every summer.

Britt found herself interested in floor mosaics from the late Roman period and received her doctorate in art history at Indiana University. She then began working on archaeological projects in the Middle East wherever ancient mosaics were found.

In the summer of 2012, Britt was living in Amman, Jordan, and got an email from a friend urging her to join archaeologists at the Huqoq excavation project in the Galilee region of Israel.

“It was unanticipated because normally in Galilee, synagogues don’t have mo-

saics,” Britt said. “I’ve been back every summer since then, and every summer we have had amazing mosaic discoveries.”

One of the discoveries made on the mosaic floor was a mosaic illustrating the biblical story of Jonah. However, instead of being swallowed by a whale or large fish, the mosaic illustrates Jonah being swallowed by a fish that’s being swallowed by a larger fish, that’s also being swallowed by a larger fish. Britt said that this possibly points to an unknown oral telling of the story of Jonah that differs from the textual traditions currently known.

“It’s causing us to rethink the position of Judaism in the late Roman period in Galilee,” Britt said. “It really shows us how connected they were to trends in large cities. We make a mistake if we think of these as backwater provinces on the edge of the empire because they were not cut off and isolated; it’s clear

that there were strong artistic networks there.”

When Britt learned the project she’d helped work on was going to be featured in National Geographic, she was in shock.

“We’re still very much in the process of excavation at the site, and, so, I was stunned that our side had been selected,” Britt said. “It’s really wonderful recognition for the project and the hard work that has been occurring in the Galilee site since they found the mosaics in 2012.”

Britt will return this summer – for the first time in two years since COVID-19 travel restrictions have started to ease – to uncover other areas of the ancient synagogue and the mysteries that lie within the literal sands of time, hoping it’ll be in a state of preservation good enough for reconstruction.

“Archaeology is a team effort, and I wouldn’t be able to do what I do without the work of other people,” Britt said.

CRIME LOG for the week of March 3

Northwest Missouri State University Police Department Feb. 27

There is a closed investigation for a liquor law violation in South Complex.

Maryville Police Department Feb. 27

A summons was issued to **Samantha P. Dillon**, 21, for driving while intoxicated and failure to maintain the right half of the roadway on the 1100 block of South Main Street.

A summons was issued to **Isabella K. Dedrick**, 20, and **Skyler L. Roberson**, 21, for assault on the 300 block of North Market Street.

Feb. 25

There was an accident between **Chance L. Allen**, 27, and **Rebecca E. Bryant**, 19, on the 100 block of West First Street. **Allen** was issued a citation for failure to yield and failure to register a motor vehicle.

Feb. 24

There is an ongoing investigation for disorderly conduct on the 600 block of North Mulberry Street.

There is an ongoing investigation for larceny on the 500 block of East Seventh Street.

Alyssa N. Kothe, 20, was involved in a single-car accident on the 1600 block of North Grand Avenue.

Derrick J. Garnett, 33, was involved in a single-car accident on the 1200 block of South Main Street.

There was an accident between **Robert L. Dunn**, 82, and **Clint D. Pucket**, 37, on West First Street and South Newton Street.

Jacob R. Norris, 22, was involved in a single-car accident on the 300 block of North Water Street.



ADDA LYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR
A setting of flowers with a sign reading “For The Victims of the Russo-Ukrainian War” sits under the Ukrainian flag in the International Flag Plaza.

WAR CONTINUED FROM A1

“It’s just scary,” he added. “People have to be ready to react in seconds and just run for their lives because they might get bombed.”

Despite being thousands of miles away, Tsytsyk hears stories of people fighting against Russian soldiers in civilian defense groups around the city.

“There’s been videos of civilians capturing Russian soldiers with asphalt with rocks,” he said. “People are very scared, but people are not panicking.”

Regardless of fear, Tsytsyk said people in Ukraine are not going to surrender.

“I just want to reiterate that we’re not going to give up; we’re ready to fight,” he said. “We are fighting. Civilians are fighting. People are ready to give their life without hesitation. Ukraine is not gonna stand down willingly, but we do need help.”

Life in Ukraine:

Olena Kovalchuk is vice rector at Lutsk National Technical University in Ukraine and was invited to speak at Northwest for their Distinguished Lecture Series last September. She was also media professor Bob Ber-

gland’s host while he taught in Ukraine in 2006.

She is from Lutsk and said not only was the world not anticipating Russia invading, but even locals weren’t sure until the day before.

“No one believed, up to the moment when some cities were under shelling,” Kovalchuk said. “And that was the last drop on the camel’s back — when people began to flee from the country, flee from the cities, towns, and were trying to escape any damages, and then just the death of their neighbors and relatives.”

During the first day of the invasion, Kovalchuk said she tried to live her day-to-day life as normal, but that was not the same for others in the capital and other parts of Eastern Ukraine.

Lutsk is just over 55 miles from the Polish border, where many Ukrainian people have sought refuge after fleeing the country. She and others in Western Ukraine opened up their apartments to those who abandoned their homes to escape Russian troops.

Kovalchuk told stories of people grabbing their families and pets before fleeing toward western parts of Ukraine and underground stations for safety away from the damage being done in

the cities near the borders of Russia and Belarus.

“My colleague has two cats at home, and he grabbed both and went to an underground station because the trains are not moving,” Kovalchuk said. “Stations are just being used as the shelter for people, but most people are sleeping on the floor in a ground in a metro station just to survive in this case of just bombing and shelling.”

Kovalchuk’s daughter was meant to get a visa to Poland on the day of the invasion, but embassies had locked their doors, leaving people without the option for visas or the possibility of contacting ambassadors.

She then tried to take a bus from Kyiv to Lutsk, normally a six-hour ride, but it turned into a day-long trip due to bomb debris, Russian military and the people trying to evacuate the capital.

Kovalchuk’s daughter ended up making it to the Polish border. Kovalchuk said it was a miracle.

“We were calling Russians friends, brothers, siblings. But when my daughter crossed the border from Ukraine to Poland, she found a lot of real siblings,” she said. “Polish people were standing when she crossed the border with

a number of sandwiches, tea, coffee and warm clothes.”

Kovalchuk has heard both sides of the opinion on the war, as her mother and aunt are Russian.

“(My aunt) said ‘that’s your fault that the war began because you were trying to blame Russian people in your country,’ and I was embarrassed because no Russians were touched,” she said.

Her Russian family members blamed the war on Ukraine, but she didn’t try to persuade them, she said.

Despite her family’s opinion, Kovalchuk said many Russians living in Ukraine are shocked with the actions of the Russian government.

“Some of them are trying to beg for forgiveness for the government,” she said.

As the days go by, Ukrainian men and women continue to fight against the Russian troops who have been seeking to oppress their country for decades.

“Ukrainians are courageous, brave people who defend not only the country but defend the whole world,” she said. “This danger brought from Russia made Ukraine united. That is the very positive thing that we can find from these negative moments.”

THE STROLLER: Your Bearcat loves seeing your whole face

Alright, that was enough; we can go back to wearing masks now.

Some of you will misunderstand my desire as some “lefty need to be controlled by the Orwellian state because you’re a sheep and I’m a wolf” sentiment. First of all, those of you who call wearing masks a symptom of Orwellian oppression, dawg, we know you didn’t read “1984.” Y’all don’t read chapter books — they intimidate you.

Second, I just don’t want to see the lower half of your face.

Whenever we were at the height of the Pangea, I was free to imagine what the lower half of your face looked like. And let me tell you, the pearly whites that I sculpted in my wonderful imagination to fit in your face look much better than the set you’ve got now. How is it possible that, for all of you, the worst half of your face is the lower one?

Back in the mask days, the

only person who had to suffer through your bad breath was you. Now I gotta smell the beer breath you guys are serving hot and fresh every morning. They should start selling mouthwash at bars.

I also got used to mouth-ing the insults I would have just thought in a pre-CoCome-lon society, and I still have not adapted to not doing that. I accidentally mouthed “moron” at a professor earlier this week, and, uh, he full-on saw me.

Luckily, he reads lips about as well as he reads through our discussion posts before giving us full credit. I was able to pass it off that I was talking to myself about it being Monday. Since I’m an actual moron, he believed I would need to remind myself the days of the week as preschoolers do.

The Stroller has been a tradition since 1918 and does not reflect the views of The Northwest Missourian.

Bearcats need to vote on local issues



SIDNEY LOWRY
Columnist
@sidney_lowry

As the year continues, campaign signs for City Council and the Maryville R-II School Board are starting to pop up in people’s yards and on social media. Rather than just scrolling or driving past, students need to take a longer look.

Of total registered voters in Missouri, 70% casted their vote in the 2020 presidential election, a sharp contrast to the 10% turnout that was seen in nonpartisan municipal elections throughout the state.

Many Northwest students don’t register to vote in Nodaway County, contributing to the 90% of people who don’t vote in municipal elections. A common idea is that because you only live in Maryville for a limited time, there’s no need to participate in city elections.

You may think none of the local politics affect you —why should you care if you’re just going to leave after a few years?

Although many students only reside in Maryville until they have a degree and then skip town, the changes made by local representatives can have a major effect while they’re still here.

At the end of last year, City Council voted to approve a water rate increase for everyone in the city and some in surrounding areas. Many leases for students include water in their monthly rent, and this decision could end with rent being raised and other prices around town increasing.

The Council also approves sales taxes throughout Maryville that impacts you and your family and friends who come to visit. If you don’t want tax prices to rise, vote for the people who will advocate for that.



ALEXANDRIA MESZ CARTOONIST

OUR VIEW:

Russo-Ukrainian conflict should not be taken lightly

For the first time for many of us, we are watching a war unfold on social media. Russia’s reprehensible invasion of Ukraine has been plastered across platforms. Along with hard news on the situation, we have also seen various attempts to humorize the situation through memes. To those of us who aren’t affected by the war in Ukraine directly, it can seem like harmless fun, a way to cope with terrifying events. However, to people who know someone to be, or are themselves directly in danger, it’s not a joke. Treating it as such is disrespectful.

In short, Russian President Vladimir Putin is using a similar strategy to Adolf Hitler’s when he invaded Poland in 1938. Russia — who already annexed a portion of Ukraine and has been massing troops at the border for some time — has used the fake excuse that ethnic Russians living in Ukraine are being brutally persecuted and Russia must step in to help them.

What has followed has been urban warfare on a massive scale with Russia deploying thousands of troops, tanks and warplanes into a sovereign state. Ukrainians have been forced to fight for, and flee from, their homeland. The invasion has been condemned by the U.S., most of Europe and numerous countries around the world.

At the start of WWII, Hitler, bent on claiming other countries to further the “German race,” used a similar excuse to invade Poland. What followed was the bloodiest war in history and one of the most harrowing human rights abuses

ever in the Holocaust.

In an Our View published a few weeks ago, the Missourian encouraged students to take time to travel to Kansas City, Missouri, to visit the Auschwitz exhibit at Union Station. It’s a great way to learn about an important period in history and learn why things like that should be taken seriously.

Jokes about the Holocaust and its victims are distasteful. It’s disrespectful and insensitive to anyone connected to the Holocaust — or with human decency. Generally, it’s wrong to make jokes about trauma, especially if you didn’t experience it yourself. It’s one thing to use humor as a coping mechanism, but it treads the line of abhorrent mockery if you’re not using it as such.

Likewise, the current situation in Eastern Europe shouldn’t be the subject of meme culture. As American civilians, we’re removed from any Russian troop invasions, bombings or other war tragedies.

Making jokes about fighting in this war isn’t fair. Americans can sit back and laugh about getting drafted — a development with little to no chance of happening — or having to fight Russians on the front lines, but some people already have to do that.

“I mean, it honestly feels insulting. Feels disrespectful,” Ukrainian Northwest student Vitaliy Tsyt-syk said in an interview with the Missourian. “People are dying, and it’s not a matter of who’s in office right now or who caused it. Putin caused it. There’s a time and place for everything, and it’s not the time to fig-

ure out who is the better candidate or who is the better politician. What we need, what the world needs, is action and not political competition.”

It’s best to try and educate yourself on a topic before making statements about it. Knowing what’s going on in Europe, how it affects the world and what’s at stake for all parties involved would be vital if the U.S. were to get more heavily involved.

Yes, the war is happening thousands of miles from us; most of us are seeing it play out on platforms we often use to blow off steam. But think about the devastation and the horror many are living right now. Would you want people making jokes about the situation if you were them? Would you want people making memes about a war you are living through — people who haven’t had to listen to air raid sirens, who don’t have to look out at what used to be their neighborhood and see a Russian tank column — people who haven’t lost friends, family, spouses already in the fighting?

Humor doesn’t always have to be insensitive, but with something that is potentially impactful on multiple countries of the world, it’s safe to say people should be more cautious with what they say. Consider what you say before you say it. Understand that what you post online could be viewed in the wrong light. At the end of the day, it’s best to know as much as you can about the war between Russia and Ukraine before making any type of statements about it.

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UPCOMING
GAMES

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UNK
CONTINUED FROM A8

The game film on Meyer’s screen was paused in the first quarter of a Jan. 29 match-up between two MIAA foes — No. 6 Fort Hays State (25-3, 19-3 MIAA), co-MIAA regular-season champions, and Nebraska-Kearney (22-6, 17-5 MIAA). The latter of the pair will be Northwest’s first, and possibly only, opponent of the tournament.

The Bearcats will meet the third-seeded Lopers for the third time of the season March 4 at Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Missouri.

Kearney defeated Northwest by an average margin of 12 points during the first two meetings. In the most recent game between the two teams Feb. 23, Kearney’s win was in large part due to the third quarter, when the Lopers outscored the Bearcats 26-10.

Meyer said defense might just be his biggest focus going

into Friday’s game to ensure that doesn’t happen again.

“We got to be better post-defense wise,” Meyer said. “That’s one thing we’ve really struggled against the elite post players in our league. It’s a team effort.”

The struggles on post defense were evident in the Bearcats’ final regular-season game against Hays Feb. 26.

The Tigers scored 36 points in the paint. Northwest scored just 14.

“We just made way too many controllable mistakes,” Meyer said.

He said that is something that absolutely cannot happen, not only in March, when it’s win or go home, but in general.

While this is Meyer’s second time in the MIAA Tournament as a head coach, this will be the first collegiate post-season experience for some of his players.

One of these players is the 2020-21 MIAA Freshman of the Year, second-year freshman guard Molly Hartnett.

Hartnett said earning a top-six seed in the tournament was even sweeter because the team barely missed out in 2021.

“I knew that this year we would bounce back,” Hartnett said.

It’s Hartnett’s first time in the postseason, but she’s far from a stranger of the lime-light.

5

games since the Northwest women have beaten Nebraska-Kearney

In her four years at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, she helped lead her team to three state championships between 2017-19.

For the Overland Park, Kansas, native, it’s all about remembering to be herself and

to play as a team.

“We always just talk about the next game,” Hartnett said. “It doesn’t matter where we are in the season, what game it is or who we’re playing. So, I just got to go out and compete and play for my teammates, play for my coaches, play for our fans and do whatever I can to help us win.”

With the regular season behind them, the Bearcats are now focused on one thing: surviving and advancing.

To Meyer, the coming weeks will differ from everything his team has endured up to this point.

“The longer you play, obviously, the better teams you know you’re playing,” Meyer said. “We’re playing one of the best teams in the country in round one. The stakes are higher, there’s no easy games, and the top teams that move on are the ones that keep getting better. It’s a different intensity when you get in the postseason.”

TOP
CONTINUED FROM A8

Though some fans grew concerned after they were handed the most losses since 2015-16, they finished the regular season with a record of 25-5 and tied for a league-best mark of 18-4.

“I would say a lot of people don’t have a lot of confidence in our team,” Hudgins said. “That’s how we’re gonna approach it going in.”

The second-seeded Bearcats get to show their new-found mantra quickly, too, as they’ll face the winner of a meeting between seventh-seeded Missouri Western and 10th-seeded Rogers State March 3 at Mu-

nicipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Missouri.

Despite getting a first-round bye, often accompanied by a favorable second-round match-up, McCollum is a firm believer that the first game in a post-season tournament is always the hardest. It’s not necessarily because of the possible quality of opponent, though.

“You don’t have a second game unless you win the first, so it’s the only game, and that’s why it’s the most difficult,” said McCollum, who has led the Bearcats to win six of the last seven MIAA Tournament titles. “We have to be ready to go and put everything (we) got into the first game. ... We’ll be ready.”

It will, of course, be a familiar face for Northwest either way. Should Western (14-16, 10-12 MIAA) prevail March 2, the Bearcats and Griffons will meet for a third time this season.

The Highway 71 rivals first met Dec. 19 in Maryville, where the ‘Cats secured their 19th win in a row over the Griffons with a 101-63 schlacking — their second-largest triumph of the season. The night was highlighted by a 36-point outing from Hudgins and capped off by an emphatic alley-oop from junior guard Diego Bernard to redshirt freshman guard Byron Alexander in the game’s waning moments.

Northwest used the second meeting Feb. 7 in St. Joseph to

run away with an 84-61 victory, which kept alive their win streak against Western that started in February 2013. The Bearcats were led by Bernard, who used 11 points and 10 rebounds to nab the eighth double-double of his career. He made sure to leave a mark on what could’ve been his last game in his hometown, too, throwing down a monstrous, one-handed dunk in front of 2,921 spectators.

“West-ern’s playing at a high level; they’ve cleaned some stuff up,” McCollum said. “I think, offensively and defensively, they’re very good at Xs and Os. Again, they’re very well coached.”

The Bearcats only faced Rogers (15-13, 9-13 MIAA) once this season, using the lone meeting to secure a 90-57 win over the Hillcats. Hudgins stole the show that night, setting the program’s new single-game record by draining 11 3-pointers.

Rogers, despite having a losing record in league play, showed promise in the beginning of February. The Hillcats were able to nab back-to-back wins over Emporia State and Washburn — teams accounting for Northwest’s first consecutive losses since 2015.

“Rogers is an extremely tough, physical team,” McCol-

lum said. “They’re well coached, play extremely hard. They’ve won some big games this year — you just have to be ready for their physicality.”

McCollum knows the better part of the next week is going to be an absolute grind. Hudgins does, too.

If the Bearcats are able to win the MIAA Tournament — no easy task within itself —

they’ll claim the conference’s automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament. If they don’t, after being tabbed at fifth in the latest Central region rankings, things could start to look bleak.

And a few minutes before wrapping things up Tuesday afternoon, amid a monologue regarding whether a first-round bye would help his team or not, McCollum turned to an old tale, one referencing Spanish commander

Hernán Cortés scuttling his own ships. The goal was to force his men to complete their conquest of Mexico in 1519 or die.

McCollum’s message, excluding the death of his players and including the possibility of the Bearcats’ title hopes being laid to rest, is the same for this weekend in downtown Kansas City.

“You’re either gonna win or you’re gonna lose,” McCollum said. “Burn the boats, right?”

“You’re either gonna win or you’re gonna lose. Burn the boats, right?”

-BEN

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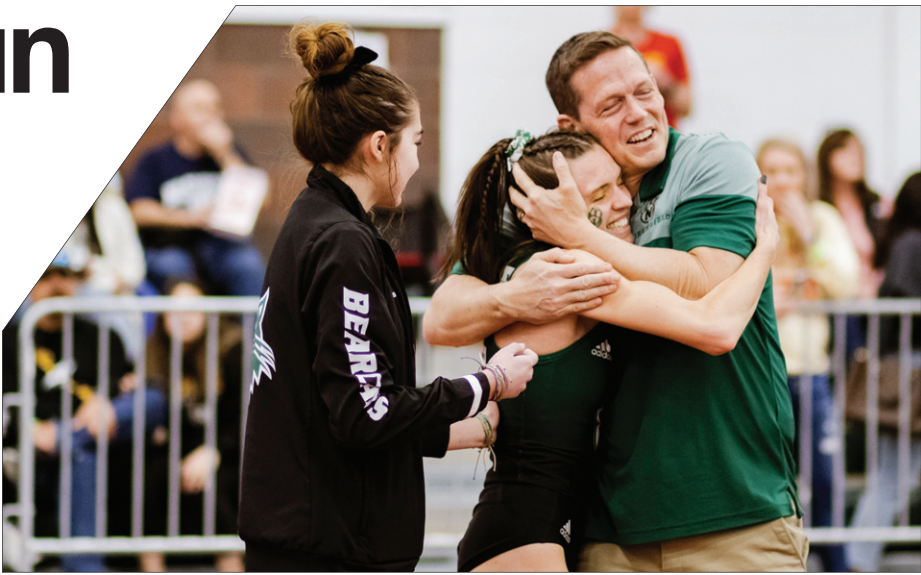
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Historic run helps NW women finish 2nd in MIAA



ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR Northwest track and field junior runner Caroline Cunningham and coach Brandon Masters embrace after Cunningham broke the program's mile record at the MIAA Championships.

DAVID DERKS
Missourian Reporter | @NWMSports

The Northwest track and field women's team had a successful weekend, led by junior Caroline Cunningham, Feb. 25-27 at the 2022 MIAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in the Carl and Cheryl Hughes Fieldhouse.

Cunningham finished the meet as the highest-point scorer (23) and helped the women notch a second-place finish behind Pittsburg State. She added 10 points to the women's total after running a 4-minute, 53-second and 54-millisecond mile, winning the title for the second year in a row.

"It was a good weekend," Cunningham said. "It was a lot of running, but we had a lot of fun, and it was really fun to see all of the ladies go out and compete really hard. We had a lot of personal records across the board."

Cunningham also added 8 points to the women's total with a second-place finish in the 5,000-meter race (17:07.35) and added 5 more points after a fourth-place finish in the 3,000-meter race (10:06.00).

"The triple is very difficult—the 5k, mile and 3k," coach Brandon Masters said. "It's a tough thing to do, and to do it in two days — you do the math, that's a lot of laps around the track. For her to finish the way she did is a testament to her work ethic and training."

"She's a competitor, so when she got in the (mile), we knew that the later, later and later she was in the (mile), that she would continue to pass people and

fight for the finish line," he added.

Redshirt freshman Ally Hammond finished fourth in the 60-meter hurdles with a time of 8.60, while sophomore Tiffany Hughey placed third in the 400-meter race with a time of 55.21. Hughey's time marked the third best in program history.

Redshirt freshman Bailey Blake finished third in the 800-meter race with a time of 2:11.37, giving the women 6 more points. The 4x400-meter relay team of Hughey, Blake, freshman Chloe Saenz and redshirt freshman Jaedy Commins placed second with a time of 3:14.80, breaking the school record.

"The women were not projected to get second," Masters said. "So, when everybody performed above their ranking and the energy was like it was ... they knew the track, they felt comfortable, and we started off with PRs early, and they just kept going — it was fantastic. I loved the way the ladies performed, and getting second was a big deal."

Redshirt freshman Reece Smith added 8 points to the men's total with a second-place finish in the 3,000-meter run (8:11.03). The distance medley relay, referred to in short as DMR, consisting of Smith, junior Jake Norris, redshirt freshman Prince Griffin and senior Tucker Dahle, took first with a time of 9:52.81.

"It was a good weekend," Smith said. "We won the DMR, and I was the anchor of that. And then I came back and got second in the 3k ... so it was a good conference meet."

Senior R.J. Williams placed second

in the 600 with a time of 1:11.16, adding 8 points to the men's total. Junior Federico Crisci also ran in the 600 and placed third with a time of 1:11.19, adding 6 points to the total.

While the men lacked the depth to rank highly at the championships, Masters said he was pleased with their showing and even believes they overperformed.

"We're very excited for how they did as well," Masters said. "To be honest, I don't think anyone performed poorly — everybody stepped up and did some of their season-best work, and that is exciting. We had them ready to go, and they had the mindset to win."

The team will send eight qualifiers to the NCAA Division II Indoor Championships held March 11-12 in Pittsburg, Kansas — Blake (800, 4x400), Hammond (60), Hughey (400, 4x400), Saenz (4x400), Commins (4x400), sophomore Jada Shanklin (high jump), sophomore Luisarys Toledo (pentathlon, 400) and sophomore Blake Morgan (high jump) will attend.

Although Cunningham performed well at the MIAA Championships, her mile time wasn't enough to get her an invitation to nationals.

"Our team had a really good weekend — everybody was popping off," Smith said. "It was exciting to see, especially after a long indoor season. Sometimes people get in a rut, and I think we had a lot of people come out of their shell at the conference meet. It was exciting to see from a team perspective."

Maryville has year upended with loss to MEC foe Irish

CORBIN SMITH
Sports Reporter | @curly_corbs

Maryville girls basketball entered Benton High School Feb. 28 with the goal of upsetting top-seeded Benton and appearing in its fourth consecutive district championship. Despite a narrow first quarter, the Spoofhounds fell to the Cardinals 41-20 in the MSHSAA Class 4 District 16 Tournament semifinals.

Benton gave Maryville issues a few games prior, but in a much harsher fashion. During the regular season, Benton handed Maryville a 65-35 loss. This time, the Spoofhounds managed to hold a team that's averaging 52.28 points per game to 41.

"Every day in practice, we've really been focusing on defense, and it really shows how much better we've gotten," junior forward Rylee Vierthaler said. "Obviously, it's not fun to lose, especially when it ends your season. I don't feel as bad, though, because everybody is coming back."

The 12-8 deficit at the end of the first quarter was the closest the 'Hounds (15-10) got to an advantage over the Cardinals (21-5). Despite a better defensive performance than the first meeting, the Cardinals simply had too much offensive power.

Coach Kelly Obley said she enjoyed watching her players implement a new defensive scheme that seemed like it was going to stop the district's favorite. However, it didn't last as long as the Spoofhounds hoped.

"I think Benton is just a really physical team," Obley said. "The way they pressed, the way they defended — it takes a lot out of you, emotionally and physically. I think, just by the fourth quarter, they had kind of worn us down a little bit, and a couple of our shots wouldn't fall."

Benton's physicality overpowered Maryville's defense and stunted its offense. One of the focuses was eliminating Vierthaler as an offensive threat. The Cardinals held the Central Missouri commit scoreless, while junior guard Anastyn Pettlon scrounged 5 points, and sophomore forward Ava Dumke posted a team-high 9 points.

"What makes Rylee so special is her ability to pass the ball and the vision that she has," Obley said. "I was really impressed by how hard Rylee worked to get the ball to her teammates. That's what makes Rylee so special. She doesn't just have to score the ball to have an impact."

The 'Hounds closed the season in similar fashion as the last — a loss to Benton. In contrast to last season, Maryville won't lose any leadership.

As a first-year coach, Obley finished with a record of 15-10, which is better than her esteemed predecessor Quentin Albrecht's 7-16 record in his first season at the helm. Obley is happy to have the group she had in her debut season and is glad to return next season with the same squad.

Pettlon and Vierthaler will continue into the summer with their usual club basketball team before reporting for Spoofhound volleyball in the fall. There's full confidence from Obley and Vierthaler that this offseason will be full of hard work.

"This season was a building block," Vierthaler said. "I want everybody to feel that loss and remember how it feels because it sucks when your season ends. Remember that feeling, and use it as fuel for next season."

'Hounds fall to No. 1 seed Benton

JADEN FERGUSON
Missourian Reporter | @NWMSports

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — Maryville boys basketball was handed a season-ending, 54-33 loss by MEC foe Lafayette March 1 in the MSHSAA Class 4 District 16 Tournament semifinals.

Maryville opened the game strong with a 3-pointer by junior guard Drew Burns, but No.1-seeded Lafayette didn't falter, as the Fighting Irish proceeded to go on a 10-point run, a streak of layups sprouted from Spoofhound turnovers.

"Honestly, you know, we were right with them, and then they notched up the pressure. And we just didn't handle it," Maryville coach Matt Stoecklein said.

Maryville's bench stunted the Lafayette run with a layup from freshmen guard Peyton

McCollum and a 3-point play from sophomore guard Delton Davis to even the score at 10 with two minutes left in the first quarter.

The 'Hounds (15-12) and Irish (17-6) traded baskets, but Lafayette ultimately ended the quarter with a 15-12 lead.

The Irish continued to capitalize on turnovers, creating a 17-12 lead just a minute into the second quarter.

Junior guard Caden Stoecklein tallied two free throws after a technical foul from Lafayette, and junior guard Drew Burns scored on a layup to put the Spoofhounds within one. However, Lafayette went on a 21-point scoring run that wouldn't end until there was three minutes left in the third quarter.

"I mean, they play very

good defense," Matt Stoecklein said. "Their defense turns into their offense, and they scored too many points off transition, off steals, and made easy points for them."

Junior forward Blake Katon ended the almost quarter-long drought with a 3-pointer, but the Spoofhounds were still down 38-19.

With leading scorer Caden Stoecklein sidelined due to illness and sophomore guard Derek Quinlin playing with a broken nose, Maryville turned to its bench to find momentum.

Davis and Katon provided a spark for the Spoofhounds, combining for 10 points.

"Being able to help out like that is definitely good; some nights you just aren't — especially starters — just aren't shooting well, stuff isn't falling," Davis said. "It's good to be able to get a little confidence boost to come off the bench and score a few points for them."

Maryville was able to string together an 8-point run led by Quinlin, but Lafayette still led 47-29 with five minutes left in the game.

Despite help from the bench and Quinlin's late run, a 3-pointer by Lafayette junior Camden Bennett sealed the 54-33 victory for the Fighting Irish to advance to the district

title game March 2.

Bennett had a game-high 25 points, while Quinlin led the Spoofhounds with 8 points, which were all scored in the fourth quarter. The Spoofhounds' will bring back everyone except for senior forward Spencer Wilnerd, and they are hopeful the experience gained this season will help them next year.

“Some nights you just aren’t — especially starters — just aren’t shooting well, stuff isn’t falling.”

-DELTON DAVIS
MARYVILLE BOYS BASKETBALL SOPHOMORE GUARD

"Coming into next season, we are going to be so much better prepared. We're not going to be behind the ball," Matt Stoecklein said.

"It's a great experience because next year, we will all feel more comfortable playing. And when we have that feeling going into games, then we feel more comfortable and play with each other better," Quinlin said.

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Hudgins wins
third MIAA
POY award

For the third time in as many years, Northwest men's basketball junior guard Trevor Hudgins has been named the MIAA Player of the Year.

Hudgins averaged a career-best 23.9 points per contest throughout the 30-game regular season. He helped the Bearcats split the MIAA regular-season title with Central Oklahoma, marking the ninth consecutive year the program has secured at least a share of the conference's regular-season crown.

"I don't know who selects that, but it'd be cool," Hudgins said Tuesday, roughly four hours before the official announcement.

The native of Manhattan, Kansas, is never too caught up in his own personal accolades, but if he did elect to marvel in his laundry list of achievements, particularly the section from season, he'd be occupied for a while.

He became Northwest's all-time leading scorer, passing predecessor Justin Pitts with 2,650 points and counting. He passed Pitts for the most MIAA starts in league history (130). He upended Pitts atop the program's all-time assist list with 658, a mark he still has time to add on. He's made the most 3-pointers in Northwest history, passing now-Associate Head Coach Zach Schneider.

If there's a record that stood in Maryville, Hudgins has put it in jeopardy. There are, of course, some lines in those record books he's completely rewritten.

All of that, and then some, has led to his third straight time receiving an award that automatically made him first-team all-MIAA for the fourth straight season.

"I think that, any time you win, there's a humility that goes with it that's like, 'Wow, they respect me that much to vote me there,'" Northwest coach Ben McCollum said.

Despite Hudgins headlining the Bearcats' recognitions, two other Northwest players were highlighted, too. Junior guard Diego Bernard was named to the MIAA All-Defensive Team for the fourth time in as many years, making him the first Bearcat to ever do that. He was also named second-team all-MIAA.

Sophomore forward Wes Dreamer was third-team all-MIAA, serving as the first all-conference honors he's received in his three-year career. The Bearcats didn't, however, have anybody who received honorable mention.

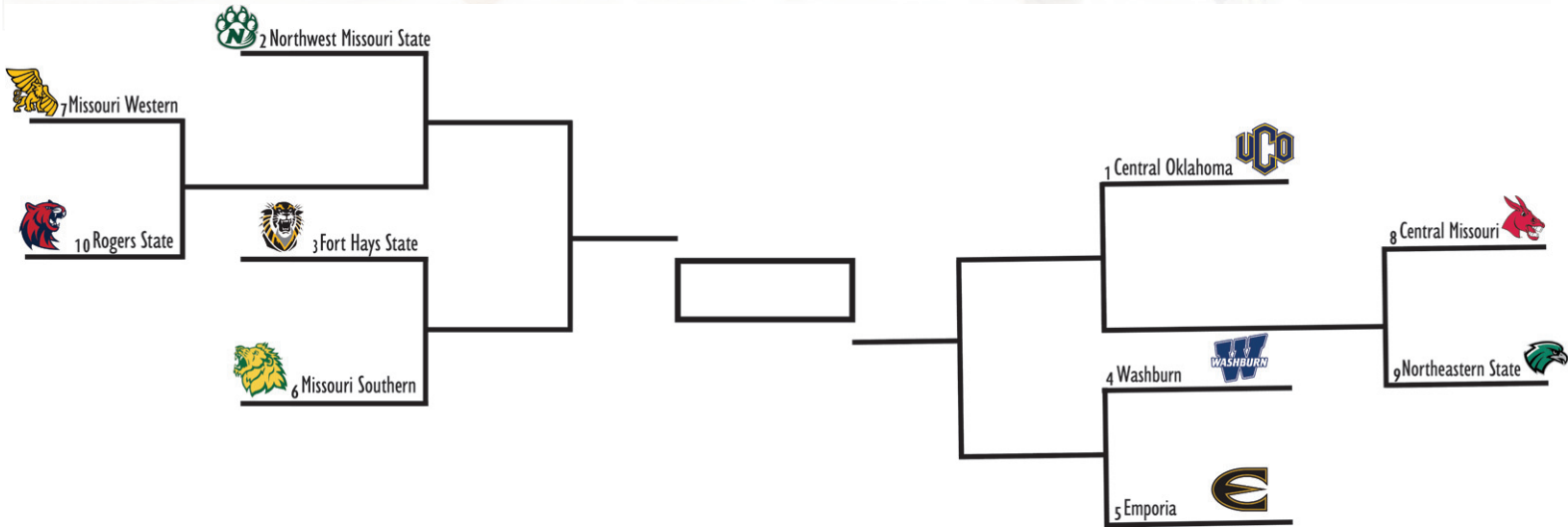


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION AND GRAPHIC BY ELIZABETH BRIGHTWELL DESIGNER

Bearcats eye return to top

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

Northwest men's basketball coach Ben McCollum and guard Trevor Hudgins have grown accustomed to, yet never satisfied with, sitting at the top.

McCollum, now in his 13th year at the helm in Maryville, has guided the Bearcats to three of the last four national titles. He's won four NABC Division II Coach of the Year awards since taking over at his alma mater in March 2009.

Hudgins, a fifth-year junior from Manhattan, Kansas, has helped McCollum take home the latest two trophies. He was the 2020-21 NABC Division II Player of the Year, only the second in Northwest history. As recently as March 1, he was named the MIAA Player of the Year for the third time in as many seasons.

But Tuesday afternoon, sitting behind a wooden table at the Northwest Athletics

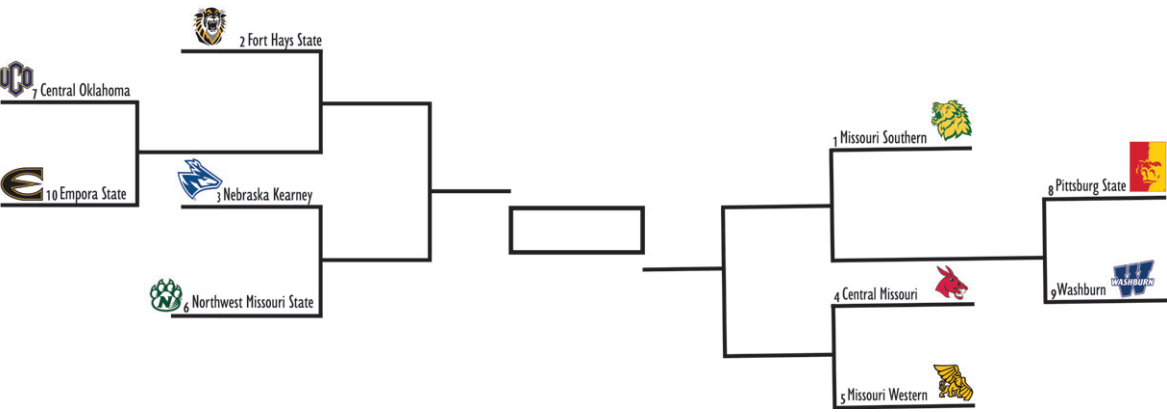
Media Luncheon two days before the No. 15 Bearcats' first game in the MIAA Tournament, the pair couldn't help but wonder why people are losing faith in Division II's perennial powerhouse.

"I think this year's a little bit different. I think, in years past, there was a strong expectation that we're gonna win," McCollum said. "I'm not sure that a lot of people expect us to win this year. So, if we can go in with that mentality, then that's how we're going in."

Northwest used a 57-49 win over Fort Hays State Feb. 26 in Bearcat Arena to clinch the program's ninth consecutive MIAA regular-season title, sharing this year's with conference foe Central Oklahoma.

The 'Cats, as of March 1, are the MIAA's highest-ranked team in the NABC Division II poll. They're also projected and expected to be one of the eight teams that makes the Division II Central Region Tournament.

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GRAPHIC BY ELIZABETH BRIGHTWELL DESIGNER

Women to face tough UNK

WESLEY MILLER
Asst. Sports Editor | @wesleymiller360

Northwest women's basketball coach Austin Meyer sat in his black office chair, his desktop computer adjacent to him with film plastered on the screen Feb. 28.

This is not an unusual set-up for the fourth-year coach on a Monday morning, but there was a difference in his situation compared to the season before — March was about to begin,

and his team was still playing.

"Last year was tough — COVID and the injuries — and there was stuff everybody dealt with," Meyer said.

The 2021 MIAA Tournament was minimized due to COVID-19 mitigation efforts, and only eight teams were allowed instead of the usual 10.

The Bearcats ended the 2020-21 season with a 7-15 conference record and a ninth-place finish in the MIAA standings.

With an early end to their

season, the 'Cats were tasked with ensuring they didn't miss out on the next postseason.

Despite the 2022 MIAA Tournament restoring its old format of 10 teams, Northwest (17-11, 12-10 MIAA) made sure it didn't matter and finished sixth in the MIAA, earning a first-round bye.

"You want to be playing as long as you can, and it's good to still be going," Meyer said.

SEE UNK | A6



ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR
Freshman forward Jillian Fleming cheers alongside the bench for the women's game against Nebraska-Kearney Jan. 15. The Bearcats ended the 2020-21 season with a 7-15 conference record and a ninth-place finish in the MIAA standings.

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